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Canadian POETRY MAGAZINE

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Canadian POETRY MAGAZINE

VOLUME 9
No. 3 — March, 1946

An official publication of
THE CANADIAN AUTHORS' ASSOCIATION

Canadian Poetry Magazine

A quarterly magazine, issued under the auspices of The Canadian Authors' Association, for the encouragement and development of Canadian verse.

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The Canadian Authors' Association established the Canadian Poetry Magazine to stimulate the production of fine verse in Canada. The publication of the preceding eight volumes was largely made possible through the generosity of Foundation Supporters, whose gifts supplemented the Magazine's receipts from subscriptions and advertisements.

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QUARTERLY PRIZES FOR POEMS

THE CANADIAN POETRY MAGAZINE is not in a position to pay contributions for poems published In lieu of such payment, the Advisory Council on Awards decides upon the three best poems in each number; and the authors are given small cash prizes. The three next best receive Honourable Mention.

The Editors do not wish to consider for publication any verse that has already been printed elsewhere.

PRIZES FOR POEMS IN THE DECEMBER NUMBER

First Prize for *Before Burial,* by Inez Barclay Kirby.
Second Prize for *Star of the North,* by Kathryn Munro.
Third Prize for *The Planter of Trees,* by John E. Nixon.

HONOURABLE MENTION

Boy at Thunder River, by Clara Hopper.
Enchantment, by B. H. Warr.
Fantastique, by Robert D. Harris.
When Skies Are Clear, by Evelyn Bamborough.

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Any reader who is a member of a poetry group, or of any society interested in the development of Canadian Literature, would be doing a favour, both to that group and to the *Canadian Poetry Magazine,* by taking this copy to its next meeting, and showing it to the members. Perhaps the reader would also suggest to the Librarian of the local library that the library should become a subscriber. It is in these ways that the people who would be interested in this publication will become aware of its existence.

Time and again a new subscriber will write "I have needed this Magazine for years," or, "I didn't know we had anything like this in Canada."

Please show this copy to your friends.

"You must try to keep the Canadian Poetry Magazine going, for it is one of the best things we have."—Lord Tweedsmuir (John Buchan).

Canadian POETRY MAGAZINE

VOL. 9, No. 3 MARCH, 1946

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Watson Kirkconnell.
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EDITORIAL

ON TEMPO IN VERSE

One of the simplest factors in poetic effect, yet one very seldom consciously realized, is the manipulation of syntax to quicken or retard the tempo of the verse. The underlying principles are four in number: (i) co-ordination of clauses maintains flow, while subordination slows down the movement; (ii) the active voice is more dynamic than the passive voice; (iii) transitive verbs are more dynamic than intransitive verbs or the copula; and (iv) the deliberate supression of verbs, especially main verbs, makes for a static rather than a rapid style.

All four factors can be noted in a careful comparison of two cantos (XI and XII) in Tennyson's *In Memoriam*. In the first of these, there is only one main verb—and that the copula "is" in the first line—while the whole 20 lines are organized into one long sentence, full of verbless parallels and subordinate clauses:

Calm is the morn without a sound,
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,
And only thro' the faded leaf
The chestnut pattering to the ground:

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,
And on these dews that drench the furze,
And all the silvery gossamers
That twinkle into green and gold:

Calm and still light on yon great plain
That sweeps with all its autumn bowers,
And crowded farms and lessening towers,
To mingle with the bounding main:

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,
These leaves that redden to the fall;
And in my heart, if calm at all,
If any calm, a calm despair:

Calm on the seas, and silvery sleep,
And waves that sway themselves in rest,
And dead calm in that noble breast
Which heaves but with the heaving deep.

In vivid contrast is Canto XII, likewise a single sentence, but (from the fifth line on) flying anxiously on through a long staccato series of thirteen co-ordinated main verbs, most of them active:

Lo, as a dove when up she springs
To bear thro' Heaven a tale of woe,
Some dolorous message knit below
The wild pulsation of her wings;

Like her I go; I cannot stay;
I leave this mortal ark behind,
A weight of nerves without a mind,
And leave the cliffs, and haste away

O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large,
And reach the glow of southern skies,
And see the sails at distance rise,
And linger weeping on the marge,

And saying; 'Comes he thus, my friend?
Is this the end of all my care?'
And circle moaning in the air:
'Is this the end? Is this the end?'

And forward dart again, and play
About the prow, and back return
To where the body sits, and learn
That I have been an hour away.

A similar contrast may be culled from Masefield. Thus a purely static and pictorial quality is found in "Cargoes": .....

The yard was shaking, for a brace was loose,
He felt that he would fall; he clutched, he bent,
Clammy with natural terror to the shoes
While idiotic promptings came and went.
Snow fluttered on a wind-flaw and was spent;
He saw the water darken. Someone yelled,
"Frap it; don't stay to furl! Hold on!" He held.
Sandalwood, cedarwood, and sweet white wine.

As for a passage of incessant action, one has only to consider the stanza in *Dauber,* where the luckless man is helping to take in sail in a squall off Cape Horn:

Quinquireme of Nineveh from distant Ophir
Rowing home to haven in sunny Palestine,
With a cargo of ivory,
And apes and peacocks,

Readers will find it a profitable exercise to analyse a number of poems simply from the point of view of tempo, and the success or failure of the poet's control of its pace.

—W. K.

POEMS

NIGHT IN BERMUDA

This night could make my soul forever calm
And hear for years to come the frog's dark cries,
The sigh of cedars and the creaking palm
Under the benison of windy skies;
Hailing the ghosts behind the crumbling walls,
Walking the centuries in coral tombs,
Down moon-white lanes, through musty halls,
Haunted by legends in forgotten rooms;
Dreaming hibiscus dreams of strange new sight
That shapes a hundred perfumes as they creep
About the overwhelming tropic night
While all the day's rich colour lies asleep . . .

If you were here to touch this interlude
With your mind's grace for my heart's solitude!

—*Leo Cox.*

DESERTED MINE

There calmness sat upon the old machines,
The wheels and cogs so quiet
As though a nun had taken vows a moment since;
The spiders weaving silence closer than their webs . . .
The remembered din of countless wheels and grinding cylinders,
The heavy oaths that hung upon the air—
Where are the men who uttered them?
What silence folds them, heavy layered?
Now the pale air holds more virility than quiet men.
The long bars of light upon the floors
Focus sorrow through the sun.
The dust-motes in the air are more than men,
While stones are solider than these
And hold their places underneath the sun.
The lonely syllables of wind
Furrow the dust upon the iron . . .
An avalanche of silence seals
The listening soul.

—*Orian DePledge*

SONG FOR CANADA

Entranced upon Canadian ground
I heard a one-time-alien sound
Come bubbling down from sky to me
In silver trills of melody—
Its pulsing spring a tiny speck
Defying gravity to check
Its spiral flight from clover-hum,
In lyrical delirium,
To where the zenith's beaming arc
Circled but could not cage the lark.

Oh, no one knows what mystery
The rapturous singer wrought in me:
Here, where Pacific's indigo
Whitens Olympic's summer snow,
I heard a voice five thousand miles
Come floating down the Year's long aisles,
With strangely poignant passion stirred—
I knew, I felt it in the bird.
No note wailed, limpidly forlorn,
"Alas, I nest in alien corn!"
But joy-in-love was there, bird-borne
From that old other-island shore
Whence lark and I, through forebears, bore
To revel in the clean warm smile
Of this large land loved more and more—
This broad and liberal domicile.

But love alone, blithe bird, you say
Is not enough, so day by day
You lilt your love-lay over, over;
"O death-clear skies! Dear nest in clover!"
"There is no rarer, fairer land

Sweet emigrant from a distant strand,
Content in your adopted land,
You pay your debt as on melic wing,
Bubbling over with grateful song,

You croon the tunes your young prolong.
O lovely little lilting thing,
Teach me to open my heart and sing
From earth to Canadian skies above:
"There's nothing matters on earth but love!"
For the way of man with his fellow-man
Can split the earth as lava can;
But love can bind them with a breath
And knit their souls, experience saith,
And steal the sting from very death.

My country, dear to your mountain tips,
Too long I've lived with tight-sealed lips!
There's not a land the world around
Can gladden me with richer ground,
With wider skies, or purer streams,
And fewer bans on dreaming dreams.
Cool stars that prink the empty skies
Bring calm, not cringing, to our eyes.
Encompassed by so much of good
Shall I be dumb as ingrates would?

The time has come when Canada must
Renew her strength through her people's trust;
In this tangled hour young Canada longs
To prove her worth by her lovers' songs,
For nothing can make a country whole
Like a song of love in its people's soul:
Relax in song, my stubborn throat,

Till children's children learn by rote:
Than fields our great great grandsire planned,
No lovelier sphere with sunnier skies
Than here where great great grandsire lies."

And only then will our land bestow
Her procreant gifts as our fervours flow
In the full Canadian symphony
Rolling in unison—sea to sea.

—*Clara Hopper.*

THE VALLEY OF THE RIVERS

Summer declines and the river runs low,
Gently sweeping
The willow-tips trailing in the flow
As the water goes creeping—
Creeping and whispering through acres of corn
That is mellow and ready for reaping.

How strident the horn
From the highroad, but none will follow
Where I passed by the thorn
To revisit this hollow—
This valley embattled and bound
by its hills, and brimmed with sound
Of the river—a sorrowing sigh
Enlightened by trills of a swallow.

Shriveled and dry
That old elm, with broken branches depending,
Bracketed upon the sky
And its great bole bending—
Bending to fall.
Who remembers, who would trouble to recall
The long summers when it made
An island of shade—
A retreat

By the Hill-to-River street;
(A way long-wending.)

Summer—Autumn—water ripples lightly
But a dark chill,
And tightly
Armoured river lies very still
When snow-stars fly
From a low sky.
But the waters loose and start
When winter breaks apart,
Welling from the frozen masses
In far mountain passes;
Making quiet rivers loud—
Turning small rivers proud
And strong
As they tumble whitely . . .

From the uplands all day long
Streams are combing
Adding menace to the song
Of the river furious and foaming.
The racking billows seize,
And bear away the helpless trees.
But men say the dam will keep
For they know it to be bonded deep
On virgin rock and rock-built to the core
But never before have the runnels of rain
Been so constant to the gain
Of the river, in its mood already bad
From the water-spate gone mad;
Racing ominously brown
As daylight gives to gloaming.

A terrifying rumble
Echoes through the town;
The tall stacks buckle and tumble

As the mill crashes down
With walls burst asunder,
And the dam goes out in a great roll of thunder!
Waters rise—
Evil waters filled with cries
And volleying with sound
Where timbers crumble.

Waters raging out of bound
Beating, churning
Rapidly to higher ground,
Rising ever, sweeping, turning,
Breaking like a sea
On the dwelling by the gnarled elm tree.
Up the steps—to the door,
Closed and held by woman's hands—
Now a woman's voice commands,
(A level voice and low;)
"Listen Darling, very quickly you must go
To the gable window up beside
The tree—You must push that window wide—
You must call, and make your calling bold;
A boat will come for you—with lanterns burning."

Oh the menace of the Cold,
Cold water; first a wall, now a tower
Which a woman's arms can hold
For a moment, by a miracle of power.
Listen! It is beating, bearing, breaking down the door!
Pouring in upon the floor
Overleaping everywhere
Step by step, up the stair.
Through the gable lights are gleaming—
Arms across the water—water streaming
over the garret window sill—
Water that spreads from hill to hill!

Boatmen rowing through the upper boughs
Of the tree, hush the child whose cries cannot arouse
The drowned from the waters and vain—
Vain the tears of the red dawn hour . . .

Peace has mastered pain
In this valley where the sun is warmly gracious
Again I shall come here, and yet again,
For the pull of this earth is tenacious.
Hear those jets of sound
From the highway! This is not native ground
To those who summon by the horn,
I shall go with them to lands more spacious
Than the valley of the river and the corn.

—*Ella Davis.*

THE RINK

Luminous disc where we revolved
Like lovers' thoughts around a shining theme
Stroking our music from the grooves,
Pale moon of unreality we peopled you
Like rocketmen shot from an alien planet
On the propellant of despair,
Bringing you neither life nor death,
Not life for we were only bodies that had sloughed
Their live constricting thoughts beyond the boards
There in the too dark darkness of the too real world.
Nor death because inside the insulated ring
There was enough of quietness to hear again
The clockwork blood swing round and round,
The quickened beating of the pulse of joy
Enough of stillness to recall that men
Live not from bread only but from air;
To savor on the tongue,
Soured with the tainted meats of death,
The unremembered miracle we now blaspheme,

The strange reiterated resurrection we enact
With every breath.

The lamps like Cereus overhead put out
White blossoms on their iron stems
In that enchanted plot.
High on the moment's rounded toe we halted and forgot
Yesterday and tomorrow's dangerous motions
As easy in our frozen hour as the princess sleeping
Before the terrible prince broke through the woods
And kissed her to the world.
Voices with laughter in them smoked ringed round and curled
Blended and broke, faded and formed again,
Our voices and their voices exclaiming
At the half-forgotten trick
The old magnificent illusion of happiness
All done by mirrors for us in that shadowy room,
And we were entertained like children tasting
The rindless pleasure of a simple thing well done

Till suddenly the lights faltered and we recalled
That the Cereus wanes as soon as it waxes
Into bloom. We remark
The trams clanging on the hill and the taxis
Hissing, and the buzz of a plane rising
From Dorval, and we are appalled
Because the sound of all the sounds synchronizing
Is like the thud of the hooves of the horse of the prince
Thrusting through the tangled dark.

Ah happy rink, Ah shining disc,
Ah silver token of an older currency,
Now laid upon the velvet folds
In memory's secret drawer.
So cheaply was the thrifty heart made rich before
And shall be so again. —*Stella Keirstead.*

OUR NIGHT

Midnight will return again, there will be
The drinking sound of the rain in the trees, other feet
Will walk through the sodden, thick-strewn corpses of the leaves,
Other arms will be linked together, other voices will talk together
of this and that,
Their shadows seized and tossed by the light of each street-lamp,

But that night will not be the same night, the rain falling lighter
or heavier with a different murmur in the trees,
The leaves blown by the wind not cluttering the sidewalks the
same,
The arms held further apart, the voices high or chattering
senselessly,
The shadows grotesque, unreal, intruding on our own that pass
and re-pass again in the slow tempo of our footsteps.

—*Raymond Sonster.*

ALL THE PATCHWORK BITS . . .

"I've lost a "lover" . . .
He was such a "lover"
His sister Margaret said.
("Lover" was a word much used in my father's
household.
You were a "lover" if you had a warm and gentle
heart,
An affectionate way with you—)
He was like that!

It was funny but you couldn't look at anything but
his hands—
Such fine, thin hands for such a BIG man . . .
Fine . . . and gentle and full of a miraculous peace.
You thought of being eight, again,
Having an ear ache.
Waiting for this father to come home
And cup a warm hand over the ear.

(A hot water bottle was no good!)
His hands were always warm . . .
WERE always warm . .

You watched the people come and go
And bend to look,
And straighten their backs
And say the traditional
"He hasn't failed a bit . . .
Doesn't he look YOUNG
And nice!"

Nice? Ah, yes . . . but SO remote
From all this meaningless gabble.
(But it *had* to be *done,* Darling . . .
It *had* to go on around you
While you wore that little secret smile
That all the dead wear . . .
The smile of one who has escaped . . .
Who isn't coming back any more . . .
Ever!

"You're *very* like you're father, aren't you?"—
"I don't know . . . do you think I am?—
I HOPE I am.
I LIKE to think I am!"—

Patchwork bits . . .
All the patchwork bits
Painfully put together.
It will never be QUITE straight
Again!

—*Mona Gould.*

WHO DREAMS THIS DREAM OF LIFE

If as you say man is but vapor
blown on the lips of science,
then why should we be mindful of him . . .

If as you say this froth of cloud
obscuring the sun is but a bubble
then why should we take thought for to-morrow?
If as you say this thing called life
has but a hollow heart,
how mighty it seems.

Who dreams this dream of life?
This froth of cloud obscuring the sun
holds the rainbow tints of a bubble.
How beautiful it seems,
how bright and glistening,
and how brief its life.

This then the gossamer dream . . .
We live, we love, we perish.
A dream, and yet how real each phase,
how devastating each theme
enough to shadow thought
to change the calm of life
into a wind, a gale, a hurricane
of unwilled storms.

This weight upon my heart
weighs nothing
is not
for I am not.

Are we shadow or substance?
Who dreams this dream of life?
Who then are we?
The thoughts expanded on the mirror of time
reflecting the infinite,
or why should there be life.

Makers of atoms, wield well your power . . .
Plato has gone

and when this pageantry of learning passes
one dream remains—unfathomed life . . .

Man straddles the universe,
defying science,
reflecting God.

—*Norah Godfrey.*

EVOLUTION

I like to think of God as formless Power,
Not hewn to shape for human eyes to see,
But, like a giant Lodestone of the Spheres,
Reaching the inner vision of the soul,
Drawing us out of paleozoic slime,
Pulling us, up and onward, towards the light.

Onward and up, through instincts and emotions,
Onto the plane of early, painful thought.
Onward and up into the realm of reason,
Not the cold reason of philosophy
But the omniscient Reason that is God.

On this conception have I built the hope
That, as we grope our seeming aimless way,
Our steps are guided by the force and pull
Of Power beyond our scope to comprehend.
A Power so strong that neither life nor light,
Nor death nor darkness, nor the shattering sound
Of atoms splitting in Earth's little space
Can swerve It from fulfilment of Its purpose,
Until It gathers to Itself all Thought,
And man attains infinity with God.

—*Marjorie MacKenzie.*

WAR BABY

Now . . .
after the aching, and the heavy dull months of waiting
and the darkness, when you longed to go deeper into the shadow . . .
A child is born
of an impulse towards the darkness . . .
and after the drawing towards the darkness your eyelids lifted to the light . . .
but you were going back, going back,
throwing life into the winter of life,
sending out life into the darkness of life
that will die.

Now you are a mother . . . You
have made life;

you have created, your child has fed on you like roots, like a quiet voracious flower among the red leaves; a world poised within you.
Bringing forth the child was as though the light had called like a bird
and in its singing, the flower burst into the frontiers of the world of life which ends in death;
and the quieting of aching stirred deeper shadows and your lightened limbs grew heavy and there were slower dreams than those you remembered
in the coming together of lovers in the living, singing time of sowing . . . You remembered the tears
of the time too little, and the stars.
Now is a time for other tears, and some sort of hope . . .
Can you bring forth hope, creator of life? Of death will you gather death?
Did you sow death, do you reap death in life?
What did they bring forth, those mothers of dead soldiers, in childbed? Did they bring forth death or life?

—*Maridon Gordon Miller.*

POSTER PEOPLE

"Lake L-o-u-i-s-e . . . !"
Onto our train,
Into our day-coach with its passengers slumped like maggots
In their cells,—
Into our frowsty coach with its cigarette-ash and matches,
Its paper-cups and orange-peel,
Its peanut-shells, its stale, smoky carbons,
Burst the Skiers . . .
Young things in their teens and twenties,
Arrogant, noisy and beautiful
In their health and well-being; in their trained perfection;
Like Poster-People . . .
Incredibly brown among the tired travellers;
Vivid
In ski-togs—red, green, blue and yellow,
And alpine hats with little feathers;
Sun-goggled,
With plastic rims of white, mauve and jade,
Startling against tan, against hair bleached fair
By the glare of a Season's snow-shine.
Young Olympians from the glittering peaks
Unconcerned with anything but themselves;
Terrifying in their detachment,
Jostling people—the pale, decent, ordinary People
Travelling to get somewhere—another job, to make more money;
To look after someone;
To return from War . . .
What did they think, the ordinary people?
What did they think, the Re-patriates?
What did they think, those two little bints halfway up the aisle
Who had held the eyes and imaginings

Of the paunchy business-men, the smooth salesmen, the Servicemen,
Ever since the Coast,
With their gauds, their hair-do's, their patter,
And their little bodies made for jiving and remunerative cuddling?
They were eclipsed . . .
Envying these beautiful Ones—these Ski-Girls . . .
With their Elegance, their poise and the mink coats
Slung over their shoulders . . .
The Privileged vs the Under-privileged . . .
What did they think, the Servicemen,
Of these arrogant Young—these citizens of the Future—
For whose pleasure they had fought and died
So that there could be skiers on the mountains?
What did they think of this Breed
Who risked their limbs joyfully down the shining slopes . . .
Of the young men with their bronze-brown skins like nuts
And their charming, broken English
Still able to ski in the Laurentians, or at Banff,
Or on the Lions
With Blondes lithe and resilient as bamboos,
With their lipsticks, plastics, and scarlet nails;
Their golden coppery tans; their pearls and mink and billfolds?
With those tiny Brunettes
Taut as whips, smart in dark ski-suits like uniforms, skin-slim;
Coiling into masculine consciousness like little snakes;
Titillating the young men,
Chattering in patois like a dozen bright birds among the drab,
Ordinary sparrows—the ordinary people with responsibilities?
Relaxed now they had exercised;
Talking of food and drink to come down at the Hotels—

(Next stop Banff—just 40 minutes!")
Of sherry, and deep baths with thick towels;
Of hors d'oeuvres and grills and strawberries in winter;
Of dancing till daylight—and breakfast at Brewsters',
Grapefruit, oatmeal and brown sugar; sausages, buckwheat-
cakes
With syrup; scalding coffee and cream . . .
(Coffee—coffee for de boys!"
San'wich—ham or cheese on bread without butter—in cartons, 25c
For breakfast, for lunch, for dinner . . .
"U.N.R.R.A. must cease to function unless . . . ")
What did they think
To hear the Skiers
Talking of Next Year
And Next Year
Of the Future . . .
Only to ski and shout and dance and eat and flirt
And be irresponsible and privileged . . .
To have the World as their Playground . . .
Ah! the poor Serviceman who went to fight
For Democracy!

—Girsha Gowing

WHITE ROCK
Gem of the Coast

Goodbye sea! And sea-flung sigh!
White-shelled sand, and white-winged sky!
Mist in morning and sea-mew cry,
Goodbye! Goodbye!

Lombardy-poplars, prayer bestilled,
Gardens arching, rainbow-spilled.
Houses studded, tier on tier,
Crown of sky and clasp of pier.
Wink of window, chain of tree,

Roads' gold twist of ribbonry,
Bonfire-blue by chimney-grey—
Smoke, scarf-dancing spangled bay,
Cedar and pine and fir, cloud-high
White Rock, gem of the coast, Goodbye!

Goodbye! Goodbye! My spirit still
Stands by the stars on your highest hill!

—*K. Jarvis.*

FULL MOON — BERMUDA

Tonight should stir a bitter poignancy,
The transient stars should wake forgotten dreams,
Or bring together wisps of memory.
I pause to look, and then it almost seems
As if the sky and stars and moon combine
To drench with beauty all that is to be.
Now all I hold within my eyes is mine;
I keep this joy. It is a part of me:
These cedar trees enveloped by the night,
The ageless stones that rest in crumbling piles,
Those hidden roads that disappear from sight;
Cooled by the moon, the island sleeping, lies.
Thus masked, this moment glows forever bright—
As incandescent as the full moon's light.

—*Evelyn Logan*

UKRAINIAN EASTER EGG

See with what cunning she has traced each line,
And deftly laid the glowing colours on
This little Ode to Easter, this small sign
That spring has come once more, and winter gone.
Here are bright squares of orange and of black,
Of yellow laid on white, and scalloped bands,
So tiny and so perfect, each small track
As surely drawn as if by elfin hands,

And pygmy picket fences standing up,
Fringing the border's edge with faerie lace,
To make a radiant treasure of this cup
Of hope and life; this lovely gift of grace.
Here like a rainbow in my hand has lain
The symboled heart of all the vast Ukraine.

—Artemis Wilcox.

THE CONQUERING CHRIST

The stone was sealed secure, where our Lord lay,
The night was cold and still and darkly drear;
The tread of heavy feet of sentinels was all
The sound, to tell that dawn was drawing near.

Where were His friends? Those people He had healed;
Why so forgetful of the One who made
Their eyes to see, their ears to hear again?
Now He was crucified. Were they then all afraid?

His hands had broken bread to give the twelve,—
"This is my body; he who eats shall live,
Never shall hunger more nor taste of death,"
For this He died, eternal life to give.

—Dorothy Sproule

MINSTREL

Another April mounts the old old stair
Of days and on the south wind's breath along
Those barren fields a tender wisp of song
Comes floating through the early morning air.
Frail thread of joy, it loops the skyline there
Then greets the sunbeams like a fairy gong
Bidding the sleepy-headed blossom throng
Awake, since spring craves flowers for her hair.
Announcing his return in trim brown coat
And daffodil shirt, the meadowlark is here
And my heart goes racing to the longlost rise

And fall of bubbling silver, each loved note
Laden with memories of a happier year
That softly open floodgates in my eyes.

—*Amy Bissett England*

RESIDUUM

The days will fall like leaves upon your going
Until no trace of this, our love, be found—
No footprint on the grassy path left showing,
No light of sudden joy, of grief no sound.

Inevitable! All that I have learned
From other partings I must now review,
Prepare to suffer sun and stars which burned
To rise again, indifferent to you.

Thus tutored I can parry swords of spring,
Of August twilight and October rain,
Consolable; though love has ended, pain
Is permanent and undiminishing.

But should some fool, in smug and blind belief,
Declare that time cures all . . . I'll yield to grief.

— *Rita Smith.*

CHILDREN OF MARTHA

Martha has daughters,
Martha has sons;
They are the realists,
They are the ones
Who look at a forest
And see timber fall,
Who look at a flower
And never see all
The desperate hunger
Unstilled by bread,
The panic craving

Of heart and head
And thirst which only
A hill can slake
Or a gold moon dipped
In a frosted lake.

Martha has sons,
Martha has daughters;
They are the breed
Of the rapes and slaughters.
They are the lords
Of the empty pool
And dry black tombs
Where the moss was cool.
They go trading
Their seed for dust
And scorn to know
That each man must
Reap as he sows;
When the last leaves fall
The taker is bare,
The giver takes all.

Martha's children,
Pity them well!
What they need
They cannot tell,
What they miss
They cannot say,
But somewhere at
The end of day
Puzzled, shaken
And all alone
They see the rot
And the barren stone;

They taste the ash
And loudly cry:
"Who did this thing?
It was not I!"

—*Gilean Douglas*

DISILLUSION

Honey has turned into gall, leaving my mouth bitter;
Water has changed to dust and my eyes are stinging blind;
The stars have rusted and left me the midnight depths—
Angels' wings have turned to soot.

And you have fallen from that pinnacle I built;
Lying in its shadow, you writhe revealed,
A strange new thing: butterfly back to worm,
Smouldering in the darkling fires of shame.

Standing apart, I watch you curiously,
And no longer love nor hate.

—*Noami D. Boulton.*

THE UNRETURNING

We do not speak nor question. Be unfearing,
We shall not burden you nor make demands;
We have gone far beyond your sight and hearing,
We are the dead, and seek not homes nor lands.

We shall not fill your bread-lines, crowd your prisons,
Nor tramp in bitterness the picket-line,
Nor come we back with starry hopes and visions—
We had our dreams, but now we make no sign;

We ask but this: that in your brave tomorrows
You keep our faith, who, rich in youth and pride,
Gave up our lives to quell old fears and sorrows—
Till you forget, we shall not twice have died.

Hail and farewell! and speed you in your faring
To nobler ends by ways too long unlearned,
The while we sleep, your further quests unsharing,
We, the lost legions of the unreturned.

—*John E. Nixon.*

HARVEST

Come, Mary, come, the wheat is ripe,
And Love is ripe for reaping;
My sickle's edge gleams swift with joy
And you are for my keeping.

Come, Mary, come, the grain falls fast
And Love is ripe for binding.
Its cords must hold our hearts as one
Each moment's pleasure winding.

Come, Mary, come, the stooks stand thick
And Love has its rewarding.
These are the tokens of my faith,
Your kiss is Love's recording.

Come, Mary, Come, the harvest's done,
Nought shall our pledge dissever.
We'll sow again what Love enjoins—
Come, Mary, come forever.

—*Albin Edmund Elsom.*

LILACS IN RAIN

The pattern of drops
Like dew-spun lace
Weaves a mask on the
Morning's face.

The rousing scent
That lured the bee
Is spilt in raindrop
Rhapsody.

As beauty pales,
Fingered by rust,
Another petal
Smooths the dust.

Yet mortal gaze
Still lingers now
On sun-carved dream
Of bud and bough.

—*Patricia Benton Mednikoff*

GRATHMIRE TOR

Grathmire Tor with angry mien
  Lifts its wrinkled shoulders high
To absorb the watered sunlight
  From the overhanging sky.

In the midst of black warped moorland,
  Rising with avenging brow,
Grathmire dares the storms of heaven,
  Rots the herbage, breaks the plough.

Grathmire Tor is laced with crannies
  Cut through centuries of rain.
Man who thinks to harvest Grathmire
  Quickly takes his leave again.

Ageless, Grathmire gazes southward
  Till the moorland disappears
In the mists of dim horizons,
  Shunned and shunning through the years.

—*Evelyn Craig Rusby.*

INVIOLATE
(On the Passing of a Poet)

Now song is ended with the summer's rose;
The last faint echo falters to its rest.
The poet's reed is folded in his breast . . .
Lonely he follows where a dark wind blows
The falling spindrift of untimely snows,
Below the hills and far below the crest
Where once his idyls tamed the eagle's nest
And charmed the watchful adder to repose.

Inviolate he goes upon his way,
Heart-warmed and candled by a distant star;
Secure within the circle of its ray
He breaks his bread where dearth and famine are,
And looks beyond the orbit of his day
Where beauty waits and beckons from afar.

—Kathryn Munro

PHASE

Bewitching, far-off Rilla!—silent valley of the moon—
Calming light from whose reflection is an essence of The Mind,
I would render you my tribute, under sway of new attune;
For elatedness of rapture has left sordidness behind . . .
I find fresh, ethereal meaning—freed by Memory, to soar:—
Ghostly, misted towers awe me, well-remembered through the haze!
In no wise is this illusion: Here was I, in The Before,
Of the host of the yet waiting, the erstwhile Creative Days.

—Alwyn Coristine.

STATUS QUO PREFERRED

"When half-gods go, the gods arrive."
Often I've heard the learned say—
But, ah, the gods are cold and wise—
All-knowing, feel no sweet surprise,
While foolish half-gods love to play,
And half-gods often go astray.
I'd choose a half-god any day!

—*Joan Buckley*

REVIEWS OF POEMS

Twentieth Century Verse. An anthology chosen by Ira Dilworth. Clarke, Irwin & Co. Ltd., Toronto. $3.00.

Canadian poets, for the first time in this reviewer's reading experience, hobnob with the "big-time" British and American lyricists in this newest of verse anthologies. This is significant of the publishing world's growing appreciation of Canadian poetry. Compiler Ira Dilworth does Canadian literature a good service in showing clearly how well the products of the sixteen Canadians among the 84 poets he has chosen compare with their British and American fellow poets. The anthology indicates that Canada's poetry has definitely come of age, is no longer derivative of outside sources of inspiration and technique and, in fact, is now of first-rate importance in the English-speaking world.

The anthology omits a good score of the best practicing poets, mainly English. Considerations of copyright and ownership, and no doubt lack of space, probably caused some of these omissions. In any case, an anthology is at best an expression of the compiler's taste and judgment; few poetry critics will cavil at the 555 choices in this collection.

Ira Dilworth, who writes an explanatory preface, was born in High Bluff, Manitoba, was raised on a cattle ranch near Kelowna, B.C., and spent his 'teens in Victoria. He was educated at McGill and Harvard (where he received his Master's degree in 1920), became Principal of Victoria High School and later Associate Professor of English in the University of B.C. He is an accomplished musician; is now a regional director of the C.B.C. for the Pacific region.

—L. C.

Sea-Woman. By Eileen Cameron Henry, Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1945. 8 pp.

In the eight short pieces contained in this poetry chap-book a native of Montreal, educated in Nova Scotia, writes thoughtful though not flawless verse on themes ranging from the heartaches of war to the alluring call of the leprechaun and the irrepressible yearning of a sea-lover who lives inland. The first of the set, "Sea-Woman," exhibits admirably the author's intense feeling and fine sense of stanza-rhythm, but shows also the kind of unyielding obscurity which occasionally mars her work. It is invidious, perhaps, to specify minor blemishes, but in addition to indistinctness of meaning in the final stanza of "To be as Earth", there is a defect of rhythm in the sixth line; and in "Wisdom" there are regrettable errors in the pointing. There is, moreover, a disconcerting looseness of syntax in "April." But these lyrics are fresh, genuine, unmistakably serious. And their imagery, particularly in "War" and "Inland", is impressive.

—R. McK. W.

John Englishman. By W. G. Hole, Cambridge: At the University Press, Toronto: Macmillan's in Canada, 1945. 81 pp.

The purpose of this unusual volume is well summarized in the sub-title: "An *Appreciation* of the ordinary practical-minded everyday Englishman, with something of an *Exposition* of his Views and Character, and of the Part he and his Kinsmen by blood and adoption have played and are still playing in the

World today." It is at once an affectionate appreciation of what the Englishman is and has done, and an exposition of the historic forces that have made him what he is.

One's first impression of its three thousand long, leisurely lines of free verse is one of friendly urbanity, of a cultivated and almost professorial poet, talking with genial discursiveness by an academic fireside. There are, for example, disquisitions on the legacy of the Roman Empire and the Norman Conquest, on the influence of the English Bible, and on the filial sympathy of the United States. There is much humour throughout, but it is the humour of the Senior Common Room, and not that of the pub or the smoking car.

Again and again, moreover, the style is heightened by emotion into real poetic eloquence, as when he thinks of the common people facing the Blitz or lingers over the well-loved scenes of England:

> *The storm-battered stability and stern abruptness of the guardian cliffs about his island home, their rugged grass-capt buttresses and outpost islets, thigh-deep in the wash and welter of the tides, wheeled and clamoured about by snow-white sea-birds . . .*

Or farther on:

> *Saw again elm-sentinelled green valley-meadows—emeralds threaded on an amber-pebbled trout stream—on either hand, rising steeply to the cloudless blue, broad, bare, smooth-harrowed plough-fields, awaiting with immeasurable patience the pleasure of the skies.*

And he ends his tribute with the words:

> *"This matter-of-fact threshing-floor, for the harvest of dreams; this consecration of commonsense; this golden freedom, which is ENGLAND."*

All who love England will love this book.

—W.K.

Grey Ship Moving. By CHARLES BRUCE, Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1945. Pp. 34. $1.50.

This volume is a moving combination of intellect, emotion and artistic skill. Most of its fifteen poems stand against a background of the war, yet the emphasis is on a vital inner experience rather than on the material and physical aspects of life. Most notable of all is the reticence of the style, a laconic conciseness that is all the more effective for its brevity.

The title-poem tells how a 37-year-old Toronto man found a long-lost meaning to life, as he crossed the Atlantic in the troop-ship *Sappho.* The only action is a spiritual one, but it is convincingly portrayed. Equally strong is "Personal Note," in which he ascribes the growth of true civilization to men of good will and finds a preeminent example of their "justice and truth and humankindness" in the old island of Britain. Most impressive of all, perhaps, is the authentic feeling of the fisherman's son for the life of the Nova Scotian coast:

Now I am thankful that this unbroken flesh
Has known hard rowing, and the trenchant bite
Of cold salt water, as reluctant mesh
Came up at sunrise from the tidal night.

This sense of the sea inspires what is possibly the finest of his poems, "Words are Never Enough," with its nostalgic utterance:

Words are never enough; these are aware
Somewhere deep in the soundless well of knowing
That sea in the flesh and nerves and the puzzling mind
Of children born to the long grip of its tide
Must always wash the land's remotest heart.
These are the fellows who keep the salt in the blood.

Now Is Time. By EARLE BIRNEY, Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1945. 56 pp. $1.50.

This is Major Birney's first volume since the prize-winning *David* (1942). The achievement of his earlier work sends one to this new harvest with eager anticipation.

The result, on the whole, is disappointing. The intellectual power is as evident as ever, but the style has gone to seed in contortions of metaphysical modernity. Our clique of Leftist poseurs will rejoice, but others will regret the self-frustration of obvious talent. There is no single poem with the straight-forward objectivity of "David." With the exception of the superb "Road to Nijmegen," most of the present volume is only semi-intelligible, as the result of a perverse striving after allusiveness and novelty. Thus a young girl's diary says:

This is the steady wind of trivialities,
of lady prohibitions and normalities
from muffin-mouths that howled away Eustacia,

and only the reader who recalls a phrase in Chapter VII of Hardy's *Return of the Native* has the key to the passage.

In general, the mood is one of intense bitterness. Thus his "Remarks for the Part of Death," associates even the alternative of religion with softening of the brain:

Continue to grow, if you wish,
Your dusty bushes of bombs
or suck the shell's dug in your mouth
—or come with paresis and psalms.

Some of his figures, however, are rich in suggestiveness:

Within these caverned days, ears cocked
for breathing minotaur, our palms
read a pied Braille of rock.

Moths After Midnight. By Vera Jameson, Toronto: Ryerson Press. 14 pp. 75 cents.

When I Turn Home. By Dorothy Howard, Toronto: Ryerson Press. 8 pp. 50 cents.

The Churchill Tree, By James Morton. Privately printed, 710 Rupert St., Victoria. 43 pp.

Earle, and Other Poems. By Alex. H. Sutherland. Privately printed, 2800 Dewdney Ave., Victoria. 27 pp.

Magic Windows, By Lilian Fortier Taylor. Privately printed. Box 837, Kelowna, B.C. 34 pp. $1.00.

The five chapbooks listed above are all in traditional modes. Dr. Jameson writes with thoughtful effectiveness, especially on the physician's contacts with life and death. Mrs. Howard has some excellent shorter poems in her collection, but she is about the seventeenth local poet in the past twelve months to use the flimsy phrase "the heart of me." At the eighteenth, I shall explode. Mr. Morton writes fluently in the Robert W. Service tradition; the present volume is chiefly inspired by the events of the past six years, including even "Atomic Bombs." Mr. Sutherland has given us, as a postscript to Tennyson's *Idylls of the King,* a long blank verse poem on "Earle", the son of Sir Bedivere, who dies fighting a pagan "Knight of Hate" but so impresses his adversary that the latter becomes a Christian. Mrs. Taylor's work is a curious mixture of the inept (e.g., F. D. Roosevelt's "soul's sweet longingness," p. 10), and the suggestively imaginative (e.g., the poem "Tranquillamente," p. 3).

Little Friend, Little Friend. By Randall Jarrell, Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co., 1945. 58 pp. $2.50.

This is a somewhat bitter modernistic reaction to the War, by a somewhat Leftist critic and poet who left the staff of the University of Texas to serve in the American Air Force. His ascription of war to modern Big Business and the Church is well in keeping with the Communist Party line:

What traffickers, the captains! How the merchants war!
Beneath their blood and gilt swim like a shade
Black friars who survey with impartial eyes
The flames where Fathers or the heathen die,
Who bless alike the corpses and the Trade. (p. 56.)

His grim sense of humour comes out in "The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner":

From my mother's sleep I fell into the State,
And I hunched in its belly till my wet fur froze.
Six miles from earth, loosed from its dream of life,
I woke to black flak and the nightmare fighters.
When I died they washed me out of the turret with a hose.

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In something of detail, then:
he will be identified
not by any peculiarity of manner or appearance,
nor is he to be found exclusively
in any particular place, profession, or occupation.
As likely as not you have just spoken to him
as an acquaintance or in the way of business,
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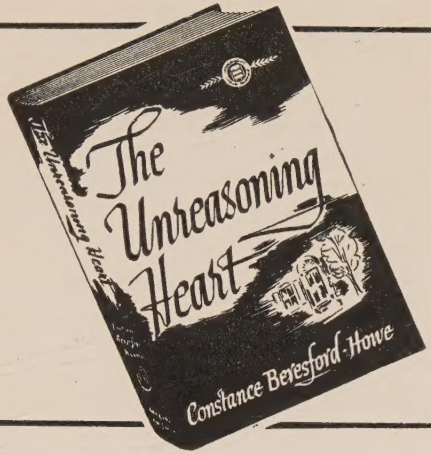

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